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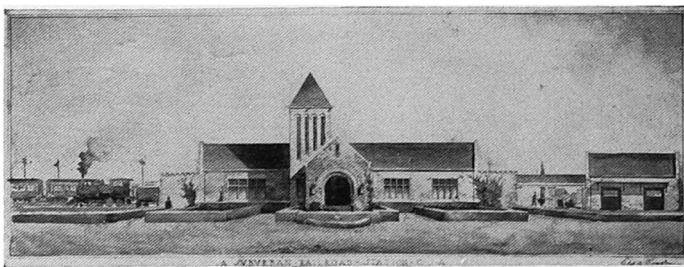
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A SUBURBAN RAILROAD STATION  
By E. A. Ruggles

## THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF AN AMERICAN ART SCHOOL \*

It is the part of wisdom in any enterprise to recognize the peculiar circumstances under which the work must be carried on. "In order to succeed," said a very successful business man, "it is necessary to conform to all the conditions of success." This truism, for truism it is, although startling when stated in this direct form, is not always regarded in the conduct of art schools.

The manager who assumes that all his students will become professional artists will be a great way from the truth. This, however, is not to say that the predominating spirit should not be that of the school of professional artists. Two or three broad differences between European and American art schools may easily be stated. In America there is a great preponderance of women among art students, and this must continue to be the case for a long time to come, although the tendency is for the proportion of men to increase, and in the larger schools the proportion of men is greater than in the smaller ones.

Americans, again, are more accustomed to comfort and consideration than foreigners, and will not submit (in their own country, at least) to such wretched accommodations, such crowding, and such impositions as the great private French schools inflict upon their patrons. In general, an American school must cover a broader field than a European school, because the various branches have not yet become specialized, and the number of students in the different departments is not yet great.

Probably at the present moment there are as many students in American schools intending to become illustrators as intending to become painters. Another large section, chiefly women, intend to become professional teachers. If there is opportunity, others will

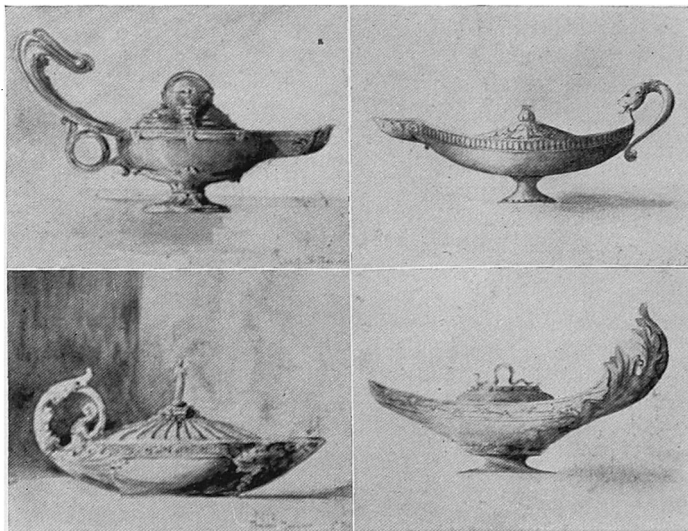
\* Illustrated by pupils of the Art Institute of Chicago.



UNIQUE SCULPTURE (HEAD) CLASS  
The Art Institute of Chicago

become sculptors, decorative designers, architects, and craft workers. And there is another body of considerable numbers, but not separately to be provided for, composed of young women whose fathers think it best for them to have some useful attainment upon which they may fall back in time of need, or who merely seek a polite accomplishment.

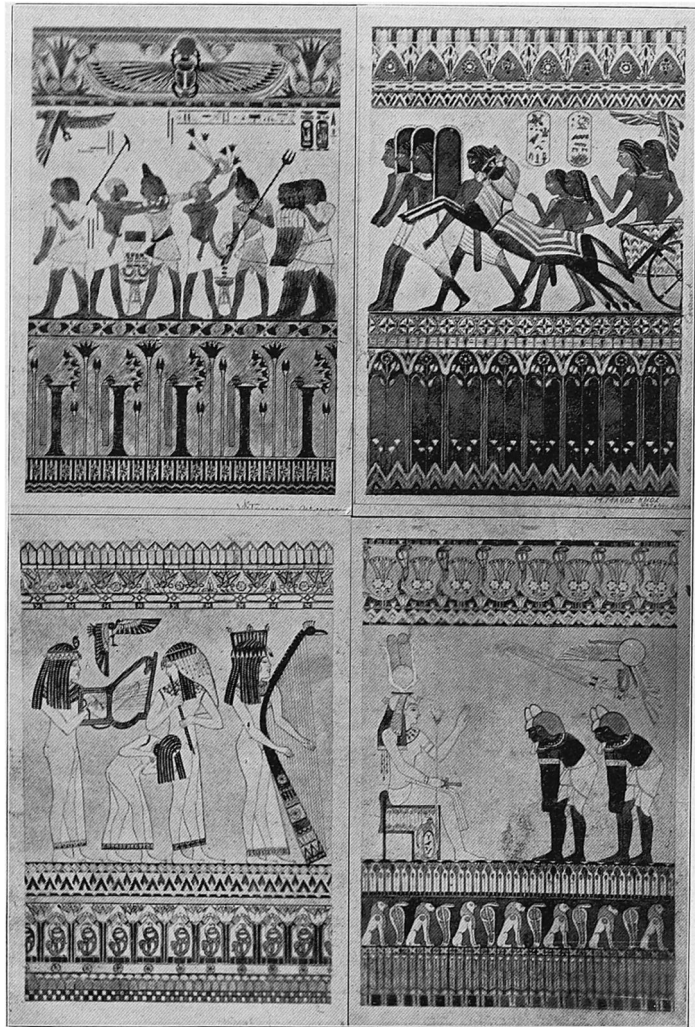
A large school will thus naturally develop into various departments, because while the underlying principles of all arts are the



ROMAN LAMPS

same, there are differences of application that necessitate specializing. Back of everything, and perhaps superior to everything, lies the general cultivation of the individual, for which the school of art practice can only make general provision. Certain features of equipment and instruction, however, are common to all departments. The art library, the courses of lectures upon the history, the theory, and the practice of art, the collections of painting, sculpture, and diverse objects of art (for we must assume the ideal school to be connected with a museum of art) are equally important to students of all classes.

We may expect to find, then, departments of: (1) Academic Drawing and Painting; (2) Illustration; (3) Sculpture and Modeling; (4) Normal Instruction; (5) Decorative Designing; (6) Architecture. To these may be added as possible adjuncts juvenile classes, evening



DESIGNS—EGYPTIAN WALL DECORATIONS

classes, composed largely of craftsmen, and classes in arts and crafts. Let us consider briefly what will be embraced in each of these.

Academic Drawing and Painting.—This includes a wide range of work. By the courtesy of BRUSH AND PENCIL I expressed my views

upon the subject a year ago, but it will do no harm briefly to review. By all competent authorities the careful practice of drawing from the antique and the human figure is regarded as fundamental. Not that there is anything miraculous in the human head and figure, but as a matter of fact there are no other subjects attainable that present such beauty, variety, and subtlety of form, combined with such constancy and orderliness. There is some difference of opinion as to medium and treatment, but my experience leads me to approve of charcoal point and the careful study of construction for a time, and the study of effects and massing later. For artists and illustrators, this training must be long and severe, advan-



PEN-AND-INK SKETCH  
By Ralph M. Pearson



PEN-AND-INK SKETCH  
By E. K. Williams

cing from casts of parts of the head and figure to the full figure from life, both nude and costumed.

It can scarcely be doubted that the same course would be beneficial to all classes of students, even architects and decorative designers, but it is not usually found feasible, because their courses are too short, and the American student



PEN-AND-INK SKETCH  
By D. Ronald Hargrave

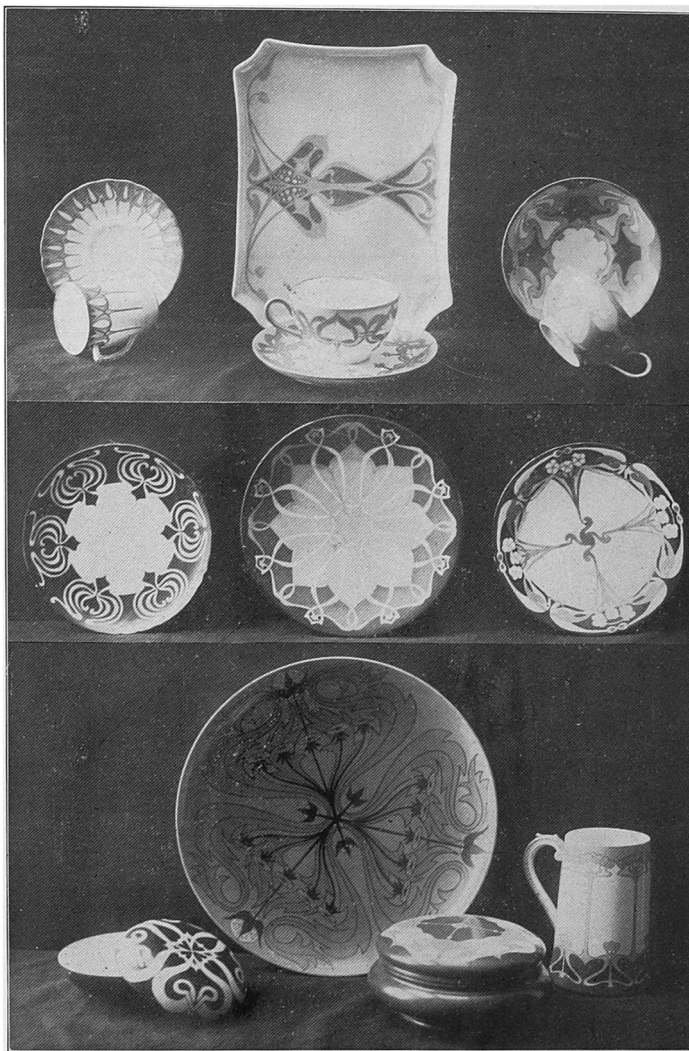
wood, and pottery, flowers, draperies, household utensils. I regard it as of great importance to students of painting and illustration that the object of picture-making should be kept before them from the beginning, and for that reason I would have all students, even the most elementary, admitted to classes of composition, and encouraged to try their hand at expressing ideas graphically. Unless this is done it is no uncommon thing to find advanced students, who can make beautiful

manifests an obstinate aversion to studies that have not a manifest relation to his immediate object. The difficulty of getting students of architecture to do any proper drawing from antique and life is well known, yet all good architects say there is nothing so advantageous for the head of an architect's office as to be able to draw well free-hand.

The necessary collateral studies I can do no more than enumerate. Short but serious courses of artistic anatomy and perspective are essential. The introduction to color may well be made by means of painting from still-life, as less complex than life, and for this anything may be used, vessels of metal,



PEN-AND-INK SKETCH  
By Edward J. Timmons



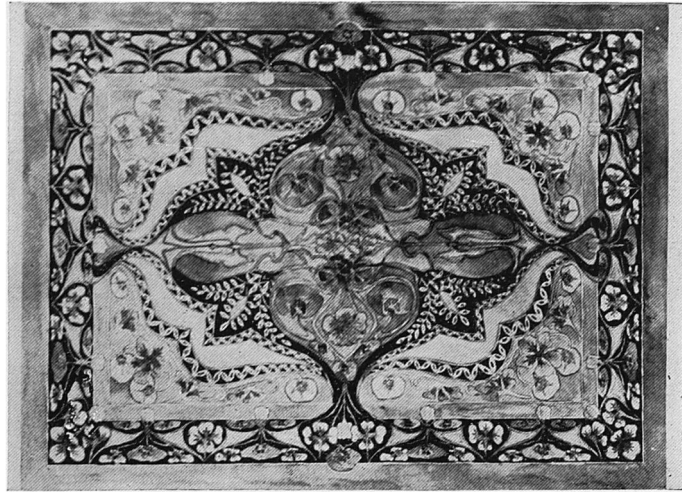
ORIGINAL DESIGNS PAINTED ON CHINA

studies from the living model, who cannot put two things together to make a picture. They are wholly wanting in constructive ability.

When the student is advanced, serious problems of picture-making



should be put before him, with the free use of the model, and his pictures should be varied from close studies in the pre-Raphaelite manner to idealized compositions. During all the course the severe academic practice should be varied by much sketching in various mediums, and in long and short time, from objects and from living models. Memory-sketching from short poses, of late called "visualization" in our public schools, is excellent practice. A year of deco-



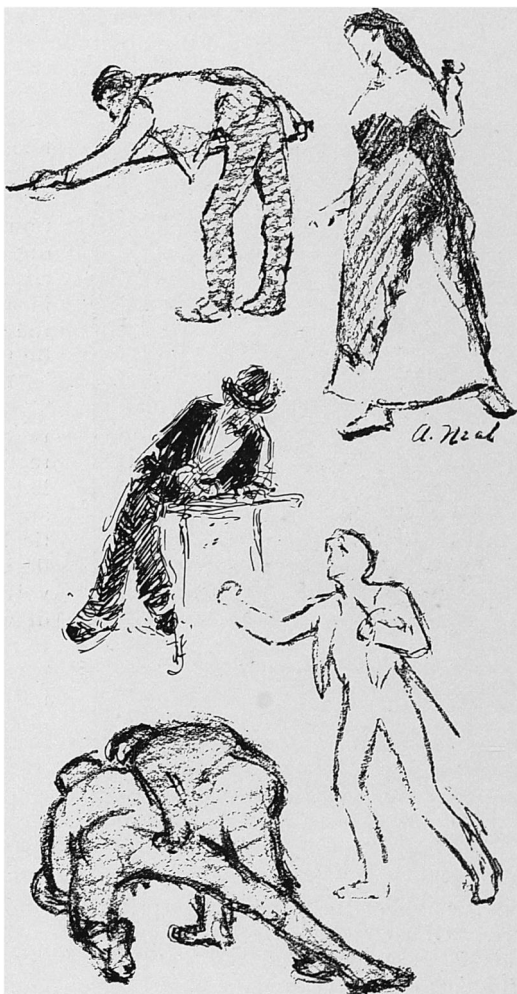
DESIGN FOR RUG  
By Evelyn Burden

rative design would certainly be an excellent element in the education of our artists. Its practical application must be patent to every one.

Illustration.—This subject is really included in the previous one, because the accomplished illustrator has need of the full training of the artist, excepting color. The ordinary student of illustration is apt to think that there is some knack of handling pen and ink that will make an illustrator of him at once. There can be no objection to the use of pen and ink at once, from objects and in sketch classes, or even compositions, provided the student is willing to do faithfully his academic drawing. If he is a person of sense he will soon see what is necessary and settle down to real work. In large schools special provision is made for students of illustration by classes under professional illustrators in pen and ink and wash, practice of reproductive processes, and assignment of subjects of composition suitable to magazines, books, and papers.

Sculpture and Modeling.—Students of sculpture are universally required to practice drawing seriously, and most teachers of drawing think it beneficial to their students to practice modeling, but this is nowhere enforced on all. In their own specialty their course is much like that of students of painting; that is, they model at first from simple casts, and ultimately from the full-length living figure. In most schools of sculpture the work is too much confined to modeling the head and the nude figure, the latter in small size, and to the production of very small compositions of groups, fountains, monuments, etc. But where the most practical results are sought, the qualification of the student to enter the studio of a sculptor in large practice and to be of use at once, the work is extended to costumed figures, to large groups set up and cast in plaster by the students, and to real marble-cutting.

Normal Instruction.—The training of teachers and supervisors of drawing in public schools is not ordinarily undertaken by art schools, but in some cases it almost of necessity asserts itself; that is, the presence of a large number of



MEMORY SKETCHES FROM ONE-MINUTE POSE

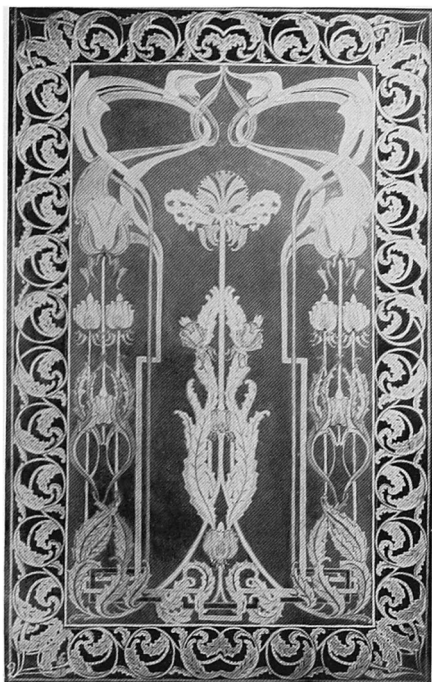
students aiming at teaching can be neglected. Of course the peculiarity in such a course must be in its pedagogic features.

It is undoubtedly the first qualification of a drawing teacher to know how to draw; but there is a great difference in the ability to impart one's knowledge, and this ability must be developed by training. Moreover, there are peculiarities in the demands of our public

schools as to methods of treatment, elementary practice of arts and crafts, presentation of subjects, etc., for which formal preparation is useful. Three years of study, spent half in academic drawing and half in pedagogic training, is the time now fixed upon by the best schools.

#### Decorative Designing.—

There is no branch of art practice (excepting architecture) which has hitherto led the student so surely and immediately to practical results as decorative designing. Design is involved in the production of wall-paper, rugs, metal work, stained glass, carpets, interior decorations, indeed almost all the appliances of modern life. Students must learn to draw, free-hand from casts, and mechanically with instruments. Their drawing is alternated with original designs, first simple and



DECORATIVE DESIGN FOR WALL  
By Alberta Duclos

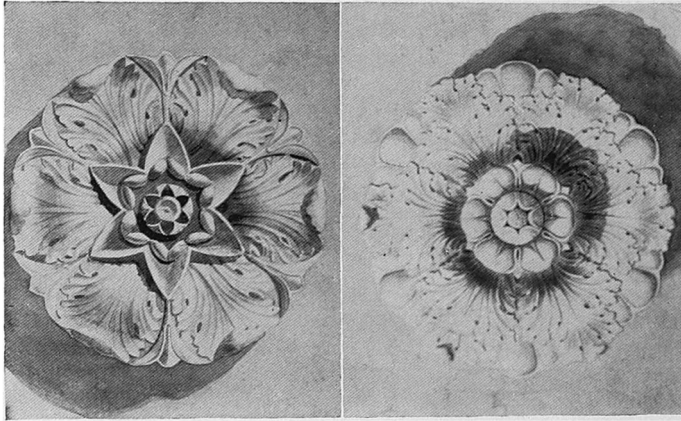
later complex, embodying the principal applications of decorative art. Of course historical studies of national styles are made, but this is sometimes deferred until the latter part of the course. Students of this class make more use of the library than others, and accumulate in their scrap-books material for actual practice. Whether the demand for the services of designers will soon be satisfied it is hard to say, but there has been no difficulty in the Northwest in students of any merit, especially men, finding employment immediately on graduation.

**Architecture.**—In architecture art and science meet, and no pure art school can maintain a formal course of architecture except in alliance with a school of science. The course must embrace widely diverse subjects, ranging from mathematics to free-hand drawing, from languages to decorative design, from æsthetics to sewerage and ventilation. The object of course is to qualify the student to design and construct buildings of all classes.

**Arts and Crafts.**—The subject of arts and crafts presents some difficulties. With a part of our community it is at present a sort of fad, and its votaries are often enthusiasts who find much difficulty in working together to any end. As regards an art school, the arts and crafts are properly related to the department of decorative design, and in most cases the only course is to allow the particular applications to develop themselves. The arts and crafts are so numerous that it is hopeless to practice them all in one establishment. Ceramic art and pottery, wood-carving, basketry, metal work, and bookbinding are perhaps the most feasible.

**Juvenile and Evening Schools.**—These scarcely need any special comment, being simply adaptations of the departments already mentioned to the peculiar demands of children and of working-people.

W. M. R. FRENCH,  
Director of the Art Institute of Chicago.



ORIGINAL ROSETTES